

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling for connecting together the ends of two pipes, comprising:

- a tubular casing, having circumferentially extending end flanges projecting inwardly from axial ends of the casing<sub>T</sub>;

- a tubular sealing sleeve inside the casing<sub>T</sub>;

- tensioning means for tightening the casing around the sealing sleeve, said tensioning means comprising two sets of screw bolts and nuts, and frustoconical gripping rings located within the casing at opposite ends of the casing, the inner edges of the gripping rings being formed with teeth<sub>T</sub>;

- the casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between the free ends of the strip,

- the tensioning means interconnecting the free ends of the strip, the arrangement being such that when the coupling is placed around the ends of two pipes to be connected and the tensioning means are tightened, the casing presses the sealing sleeve against the pipe ends to form seals and forces the teeth on the gripping ring to bite into the surface of the pipes to grip the pipes,

- wherein the free ends of the strip are bent outwardly to form radially projecting flanges extending longitudinally of the casing on opposite sides of the gap, the two radially projecting flanges being placed between two reinforcing members which extend substantially the length of the coupling, the tensioning means passing through two sets of aligned holes

in the reinforcing members and the radially projecting flanges, the reinforcing members each having an angled cross-section, a web portion through which the holes for the tensioning means pass, and a reinforcing member flange extending along the longitudinal edge of the web portion that is nearer to the axis of the coupling, ~~the reinforcing member flange bearing against the tubular portion of the casing~~ wherein each said web portion of each said reinforcing member is in surface-to-surface contact with a planar surface of a respective said radially projecting flange.

11-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim ~~12~~10 in which ~~each said reinforcing member has a channel-shaped cross section with reinforcing member flanges extending along both longitudinal edges of the web portion,~~ and the nuts are of a size that fits between the flanges of each said reinforcing member so as to prevent rotation of the nuts.

15. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim ~~12~~10 which is arranged so that, as the bolts are tightened, the radially projecting flanges are drawn together, thereby causing the tubular casing to apply radially compressive forces to the sealing sleeve and the gripping rings.

16. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to claim 10, wherein the aligned holes are elongated in the radial direction.

17. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 including backing rings provided inside the casing adjacent a respective said gripping ring between the gripping

ring and the sealing sleeve to prevent the sealing sleeve from bulging between the teeth of the gripping ring.

18. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 including an inner sleeve provided inside the sealing sleeve to prevent the sealing sleeve from bulging inwardly between the pipe ends.

19. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10, wherein the outer ends of the radially projecting flanges are bent back ~~in a transverse direction~~ to form planar stiffening flanges along the longitudinal outer edges of the radially projecting flanges.

20. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to claim 19, wherein the radially projecting flanges are bent back at right angles.

21-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to claim 14 which is arranged so that as the bolts are tightened, the radially projecting flanges are drawn together thereby causing the casing to apply radially compressive forces to the sealing sleeve and the gripping rings.

25. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling for connecting together pipe ends, comprising:

a tubular casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip, the free ends of the strip being bent outwardly to form opposing spaced radially outwardly projecting flanges that extend longitudinally outwardly on opposite sides of the gap, the radially projecting flanges including through holes adjacent the free ends thereof extending therethrough, said tubular casing

further comprising inwardly extending end flanges projecting inwardly at axial ends of the tube of said tubular casing;

a hollow generally tubular sealing sleeve located inside the casing for receiving ends of pipes therein;

frustoconical gripper rings located within and at opposite ends of the casing and having inner edges formed with teeth;

a pair of reinforcing members separate from the tubular casing and having a length substantially the same as a longitudinal length of said projecting flanges of said tubular casing, each said reinforcing member including a web portion with ~~transverse~~ through holes ~~extending therethrough~~ for placement substantially in alignment with the through holes of said respective outwardly projecting flanges when said reinforcing members contact with said projecting flanges on opposite sides of the gap, said reinforcing members each including a reinforcing member flange extending along a longitudinal edge of said web portion that is nearest to the axis of the coupling so that the longitudinal edge ~~of where~~ said web portion and said reinforcing member flange ~~at the longitudinal edge bear~~ directly adjoin bears against a region on an outer surface of said tube of said tubular casing; and

a tensioning arrangement for placement through the aligned through holes of said web portions and said outwardly projecting flanges for interconnecting the free ends of the opposing spaced radially outwardly projecting flanges and for moving said flanges toward each other to tighten said tubular casing around said sealing sleeve,

wherein, when the coupling is placed around the ends of two pipes to be connected and said tensioning arrangement is tightened, said tubular casing presses said sealing sleeve against pipe ends to form seals and forces the gripping rings to grip the respective pipe ends.

26. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, wherein a planar surface of said web portion of each said reinforcing member is configured for surface-to-surface contact with a planar outer surface of a respective said radially outwardly projecting flange.

27. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, said coupling further comprising a bridging member for spanning the longitudinal gap.

28. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, wherein said sealing sleeve comprises a sealing gasket having sealing lips formed near each end thereof.

29. (Previously presented) A pipe coupling according to Claim 28, including a steel inner sleeve for placement within a smooth middle portion between said sealing lips within said sealing gasket.

30. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling for connecting together ends of two pipes, comprising:

a tubular casing formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip, the free ends of the strip being bent outwardly to form opposing radially outwardly projecting substantially planar flanges that extend longitudinally outwardly on opposite sides of the gap, the radially projecting flanges including through holes adjacent the free ends thereof and extending therethrough;

a hollow generally tubular sealing sleeve located inside said tube of said tubular casing for receiving ends of pipes therein;

frustoconical gripping rings located within and at opposite ends of said tube of said tubular casing;

a pair of reinforcing members dimensioned for extending along a longitudinal length of said projecting flanges of said tubular casing, each said reinforcing member including a web portion having a planar surface with ~~transverse~~ through holes ~~extending therethrough~~, said reinforcing members configured for placement substantially in alignment with the through holes of said respective outwardly projecting flanges when said web portion of each said reinforcing member is placed into surface-to-surface contact with the planar surface of a respective said projecting flange, said reinforcing members each including a reinforcing member flange extending along a longitudinal edge of the web portion that is nearest to the axis of the coupling so that at least a part of at least one of the edge of said web portion and the adjacent edge of said reinforcing member flange contact a region on an outer surface of said tubular casing; and

a tensioning arrangement for placement through the aligned through holes of said web portions and said outwardly projecting flanges for interconnecting the free ends of the opposing radially outwardly projecting flanges and for moving said outwardly projecting flanges toward each other for tightening said tubular casing around said tubular sealing sleeve.